
THE

MEXICAN SPHINX

BY

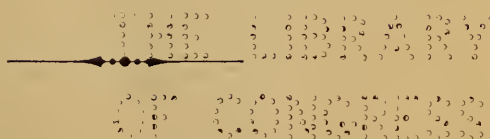
J. J. GUTIERREZ.

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J. J. GUTIERREZ.



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PREFACE.

OBJECT OF THE REFUTATION.

To a person who has lived for long years in a foreign country, the small circle of friends which he has gradually formed offers the only obstacle to the wish to return to his own country, where he is claimed by ties which never can be forgotten. For me, who have had the fortune to find in my friends in this country a second family to augment my own, the two countries to which the members of this family belong occupy the most prominent place in my thoughts in those moments of mental expansion when the heart and not the head rules. In those moments there is no heated discussion possible; any opinion, although entirely opposed, is expressed with the desire to know the truth; and the debate, to bring forth and illustrate this truth, can never go beyond the limits set by affection.

Some time ago, in one of our friendly gatherings, the conversation turned upon the barbarity of the conquerors of Mexico, and of the domination of that country for centuries. The opinions expressed depreciating the Spanish race, which may have committed acts which cannot be defended in the light of modern civilization, but are certainly not worse than those of which other nations have been guilty, and the want of historical truth evinced, made me suspect that these opinions might have been caused by some work which was unknown to me. I did not cease my inquiries until I obtained the book which had given rise to our friendly discussion, and in this manner the work which calls forth this criticism came to my notice.

Since that work pretends to assume the character of an historical study, it demanded my special attention, and for that reason I devoted to its study the few leisure hours which my occupations .

left me. I extracted and arranged with special care the data contained therein, which required a long time, and compared them with the historical data obtained in my country, both with regard to the Spanish domination of Mexico, as well as to what has happened since the declaration of its independence. As a result of my labors I found nothing to contradict my belief, that since the author of the book in question is little versed in both the ancient and the modern history of the country to which he refers, it is impossible that his work can be truthful, nor can the opinion be exact which he forms of that country, and which he tries to form in the minds of his readers.

Every writing emitting a personal idea is worthy of the consideration due to a personal opinion; if true, it is inexpugnable; and if not true, it can be confuted only by substituting one opinion with another one of the same nature. But it is a different matter to attack an opinion resulting from an historical study and having no personal character, but describing a nation, judging it with apparent proofs deduced from its history, and affirming these deductions with the personal studies made in that nation.

To demonstrate whether or not a study of this kind is based on historical truth invoked by the author, it is not necessary to possess great talent or to be accustomed to write for the public. To take an historical fact and place it against what the author to be contradicted tries to deduce therefrom, leaving the reader to judge for himself, this can be done even by a child, as nobody will believe that white can be obtained by using black. Truth will make its own way even in the minds of the most prejudiced.

There exists, notwithstanding, a great difficulty if this work consists of continuous invectives against a race or a nation, and its government and patriotism, which are likely to affect the calm judgment of the critic if he does not possess the necessary criterion to understand that nothing can be gained by answering one insult by another; and that, on the contrary, it may prove prejudicial; that in refuting, or in writing about history, a preconceived bias is in itself sufficient to ruin the work which is being written; that if truth, in order to convince, must necessarily humble the antagonist, no one would be willing to accept it; and finally, that for an honest opposition each opponent must occupy his proper place, as otherwise they would be alike.

I hope not to forget what I say above, and in this manner to avoid the principal difficulty of my task, as in this conflict I shall use the very same historical citations contained in the book alluded to, without adding a single new one. I shall only make some digressions from the main course for the purpose of making the reader acquainted with what is not yet sufficiently known, in order to modify his judgment in favor of the purpose which brings me into the arena, and to encourage better relations between Mexico and the United States, by destroying, as far as possible, erroneous ideas which have no reason for existence.

I wish still to observe that I shall make no comparisons, as a precept of Christianity teaches us that "thou shalt be measured by the yard thou measurest by," and besides, I consider them odious. If I make use of the same comparisons that the author of the book alluded to has used, I remain within the bounds set by him, and especially when his own work is under discussion, and by doing so I shall in no way be wanting in the respect which I have always had for persons and subjects.

I will not commit the injustice of believing that the erroneous opinions so often heard about my native country are intended as a gratuitous offence, as during the nine years that I have lived among the American people I have had occasion to know them well, and am convinced that later they will do us justice. These opinions are merely the result of an error, which cannot be eradicated if false historical representations are allowed to go uncontradicted, and thus further affirm prejudices by the silence of those who can and ought to dissipate them. If a citizen of whatever nationality has knowledge of defamations of his country, and does not endeavor, as in duty bound, to make clear the truth, he is not worthy of his own country nor of the respect and consideration of the country in which he lives.

Before concluding, and on the ground that a literary work has no sex, I beg the author of the one in question to pardon me for attacking his book; but he has forced me, as a Mexican, to do so. I shall not answer his invectives against my race by other invectives, as that would be imitating what he has himself done without any justification. If I do not accept those parts of his arguments which I believe to be illogical, and present them as they are, I only use the right which he must concede to any reader of his book.

What I now publish, as a refutation, does not contain all that I have written during many months upon the work, "Political and Progressive Mexico." But as I could not overcome the difficulties which I met in regard to its publication, and as I learn that in the near future a new edition of that book is to appear, renewing the attacks upon my country, I feel doubly obliged to answer now so as not to apparently approve its contents by my silence.

BOSTON, Aug. 1, 1890.

THE MEXICAN SPHINX.

A REFUTATION OF THE WORK "POLITICAL AND PROGRESSIVE MEXICO."¹

"The art and beauty of historical composition is to write the truth." —
(BERNAL DIAZ DEL CASTILLO).

THE above-quoted maxim was written by one of the valiant companions of Cortes; and the author of "Political and Progressive Mexico," by invoking this axiom, intended to invest his work with a character of veracity, without which an historical essay is without value and can be at once contradicted. A writer on contemporaneous history who pronounces his personal opinions, even if they are erroneous, does not destroy what he himself contended for, since historical truth is sifted out from contradictory testimony. This does not, however, happen when, speaking of a well-settled historical fact of that class which has left visible traces, he says to his readers, "I have looked for these traces in the country itself, and have not seen them," and by this assertion stamps at once upon the history which he pretends to write such a character of falsehood, as if a writer on ancient Rome should say, "I have not seen the Colosseum;" or, if writing on the history of Mexico, he should deny the existence of the monumental ruins of Mitla or Palenque.

This will scarcely be credible without taking into account that the injunction of Bernal Diaz demands, as the first indispensable condition, a calm mind exempt from prejudices, as it is a well-known fact that a preconceived idea is a moral infirmity, which not only prevents perceiving the limits not to be passed by the narrator of historical events without descending from the lofty

¹ Boston, 1888: Lee & Shepard, publishers.

position which the historian ought to occupy, but also prevents seeing objects as they really are.

We shall see, in the critical examination which I will make of the work to be refuted, if this first and indispensable condition has been present, or considered unnecessary.

The author begins his narration by quoting authorities for the history of Mexico, relating the conquest of that country, describing briefly the actions of the conquerors, and the purpose of the government of Spain in the establishment of colonial government; dwelling especially on all those acts which he believes worthy of reprehension, while in this part of his relation nothing is to be found favorable to the conqueror, under any aspect; and he surmises that the Catholic religion was degraded to an extent which could not be even suspected by those oppressed by the conquerors. It would not have been prejudicial, but rather favorable to his purpose of writing a historical study, to have added also some brighter touches to his picture, as not everything was dark in the Spanish conquest and domination of Mexico.

In order that my readers may form a perfect idea of how much an author may be blinded by prejudice, I will only quote a single paragraph, which I find on page 200. It reads: "On the other hand, shallow religious partisanship has credited the Spaniards with achievements in Mexico, educational and moral, of which there is little material proof." That is to say, that the grand structures, which he himself refers to when speaking about education, and some of which were constructed by the partisans of the religious idea, and others under that religious idea itself, are not proofs for the author, who does not seem to know, either, that under the union of the religious and political idea (since it cannot be conceived how Church and State, being legally united, could be each independent), arose whatever edifices of that class may yet exist in cities and villages, and they afford proofs of such grandeur, that only he who is blind could say, "they do not exist."

Continuing his narrative, the prejudice which rules him appears again in the following passage, where, after quoting from a work of Mr. David A. Wells, who defines according to his own fancy the object for which the colonial government was established, the author of the work which I criticise says, on page

182: "Is not that a description of the English domination in Ireland? The consequences are curiously correspondent. The land in Mexico" (referring to 1888) "is owned, like the land in Ireland, by a small number of proprietors. The tillers in Mexico have no more interest in the result of their toil than had the tenants in Ireland prior to the beginning of the land-reform era, forced upon the English government by the people of Ireland. The Mexican landlords reside abroad in large numbers, like the landlords of Ireland; and the money produced by the soil flows out of Mexico, in exports of bullion for the absentees and their creditors, precisely as the crops and money of Ireland."

The foregoing paragraph comprises sundry ideas, dissimilar in my opinion; and as I said before that I desire to present the debatable points with distinctness, I will separate them into three, in order to be more concise in my answers.

First. "The land in Mexico, like the land in Ireland, is owned by a small number of proprietors."

Second. "The landlords of Mexico, like the absentee landlords of Ireland, reside abroad and pocket the produce of the soil."

Third. "That the proletariat of Mexico has not forced the nation to reform the agrarian laws, as the Irish have forced the English government to do."

But, since for the sake of the clearness of my refutation I cannot answer them in the foregoing order, I will invert the numbers so as to finish with the first, which for my purpose is the only one of importance.

Answering the third: That I gladly shall accept and applaud whatever may be done in favor of the Irish people, so that they may have the satisfaction of living contentedly in the land of their ancestors, and not in a foreign country.

To the second, I answer: It is not true, at all, that most of the Mexican landlords reside abroad, — the reverse is the truth, — but I find nothing undue or blamable in any person residing wherever he pleases, as otherwise I should not live now in a country which I like; nor do I believe that one who receives the income from his own property is plundering anybody; and lastly, if the Mexican landlord pays his creditors he proves his honesty to everybody who may hear of it.

As regards the first point, without stopping to consider the cov-

ert insinuation which the author wishes to convey, as servitude disappeared from Mexico long before the declaration of independence, I will limit myself only to prove that the natives of Mexico have enjoyed the right of property ever since the conquest; and this has followed its progressive course, which in nothing differs from what happens and will continue to happen in every nation.

Since the conquest the Indian has been in possession of land, either as individual or common property, as proved in the same work which I am contradicting, quoting from Alzog, who asserts, and his estimate is low, that "the clerical party possessed about one-half of the immovable property of the municipalities" which belonged in common to all the inhabitants, for the greater part Indian rustic laborers; and as this property consisted nearly all of lands, the ground-rent to be paid was very moderate, and the property passed from generation to generation, until the law abolishing mortmain converted it into the real property of its possessors, who subdivided it between themselves. As from the time of the conquest the acquisition of property by *legal means* was permitted to everybody, without distinction of persons, it can easily be understood how this acquisition extended as rapidly as the social conditions and the increase of population permitted; and this cannot be brought about by any vaunted reform of the agrarian laws.

The truth of the aforesaid has long been demonstrated, as it is the rational consequence of a natural law which applies to all nations, be they more or less civilized, and is therefore inevitable. This is the reason why we see in Texas and other States of the Union, properties covering immense areas, while this is scarcely possible in any of the New England States. Since more than twenty years the subdivision of rural property in Mexico has become notably frequent in all the districts where the increase of population demanded it, and to-day it is a common occurrence to see the Mexican landlord selling his property, without official compulsion, in small fractions to his tenants or outsiders; and this has been done to such an extent, that in some districts this subdivision has nearly obtained the same proportions as in New England.

As regards the interest which the Indian feels in the soil, or as the Spanish say, the value which even the smallest parcel of landed property has for the Indian, if the author whom I am refuting would only have taken the trouble to make inquiries of

any, even the most ignorant, Mexican, he would have learned that there have been thousands of lawsuits in the courts of Mexico, in the colonial era and since the Independence, which have cost the Indians twenty times the value of the land in dispute; and thus he would have seen that we had no need of asking foreigners for the reform of our agrarian laws.

If he should wish to know for what reason the same Indian, notwithstanding his religious fanaticism (which I will explain further on), was the cause of making irrevocable the law secularizing church property, so that not even the Emperor Maximilian, in spite of his pledge, could abrogate it, he would learn that the slightest attack on the reform-laws, which finally rendered possible the subdivision of property, would have caused all the "oppressed race" to which he refers to rise as a single man, and would have made the war of Intervention still more sanguinary.

In the same paragraph, on page 183, the author says: "A more muscular race made a more persistent resistance to England, and Ireland has begun the recovery of her complete rights." Without paying attention to the gratuitous insult towards my country and myself, implied by the preceding phrase, my refutation is very simple. If we are not a *muscular race*, we ought to be credited with *another quality* which is generally *opposite* to a muscular development, and more notable by its effects in a nation than in the individual. As regards the author who writes an historical work and compares the situation of our country with that of another, and prefers that people which begins by using forcible means against a foreign domination, rather than us, who have begun by using the first natural right, that of sovereignty, without which no other right can exist, this is a matter of taste about which there can be no dispute. Notwithstanding the weight which the opinion of a native of that country may have in such a case, I believe that the acceptance of the principle laid down by him will not be general.

In the same ninth chapter, on page 184, I find the following passage: "A patriot priest, the divine instinct of nationality carrying him above the dreaming masses of his fellow-countrymen, at length arose against the Spanish domination. He paid with his life for his devotion to his country, but the death of Hidalgo blew the breath of liberty into Mexico. His country relapsed for a time under the old oppression. In another decade

she made another desperate and more successful, but far from sufficient, effort; and, when the flag of *the republic* was unfurled in 1821, the symbol upon it was that of the old native race, the eagle and the cactus, the emblems of the Aztecs."

I must again invert the order of the preceding paragraph, so as to begin by what can be answered shortly.

First. And this I do not answer, because I do not know these kind of efforts, "more successful, but far from sufficient."

Second. To the statement that the republic was established in Mexico in 1821, I answer at once, it is not true, as I will prove in due time by quotations from the same author whom I am refuting.

Third. After the death of Hidalgo the "country relapsed for a time under the old oppression." This is not true; I will begin at this point, which requires an explanation.

At the time of Hidalgo's death the former oppression, although part of the country was subjugated again, could never be fully reëstablished, as the contest in large masses was converted into a struggle of small fractions; and this, far from extinguishing the breath of liberty, strengthened and prepared it for the appearance in this strife of the most distinguished hero of the Mexican Independence, Morelos.

Morelos was a truly Christian priest of the lower clergy, like others of his class, who fought and shed their blood for the independence of their country. He belonged to that class of people who, in the words of the author, on page 185, "knew little of arms and had none." But he possessed a large stock of common sense, which taught him that which the author discloses to the public, and which I accept without reserve: that the Mexican nation is not a *muscular race*; and he knew how to take advantage of a quality which distinguishes the Mexican from another nation; and, with firm resolution, he grasped the banner of independence and sallied forth to the struggle. He had no arms for the contest, but conquered them from his opponents; his compatriots did not know the use of these arms, but he taught them to wield them and to carry them from victory to victory over the oppressors of his country, in such a manner that it is an historical fact, that the greatest captain of this century declared, "I would be honored by his being one of my generals." This opinion was drawn from the great Napoleon by the famous siege of

Cuautla, and I hope the author of the paragraph on pages 184 and 185 will read the account of this siege and give us his opinion of the same, even without making comparisons.

When Morelos had been sacrificed, the struggle for independence did not die out, for Guerrero (treacherously shot by the conservatives later on), Alvarez, Victoria, Bravo, and a host of others, continued to uphold the cause proclaimed by Hidalgo.

With reference to the second point of this controversy, namely, the establishment of the republic in 1821 as the first government of independent Mexico, the falsity of which I offered to demonstrate by the very words of the author of the assertion, I can do so in few words: On page 185, after explaining the causes which contributed toward the form of government chosen by the Mexican people on accomplishing its independence from Spain, in 1821, he says, textually: "It was impossible that such a people should be eager in seizing upon the chances for the erection of a *representative government* on the ruins of hereditary despotism." Therefore, it was not a republic which was established in 1822, but a monarchy, with Iturbide as emperor. Thus has this been proved by the very author of the expression, "*Mexican republic in 1821.*"

And from the same paragraph, on page 185, arises the following explanation: Iturbide was elected by an assembly of notables exactly the counterpart of that which the author of the work referred to, when speaking of the election of Maximilian, qualifies thus, on page 188: "But the assembly of reactionaries, who went through that ceremony for him, no more represented the people of Mexico than the people of any other land." There was, notwithstanding, a noteworthy difference between the two assemblies; that which elected Iturbide did not have the support of a foreign invader, while that which elected Maximilian was sustained by foreign bayonets. The former wished to continue the monarchical tradition, at that time active and strong in the privileged class; while that electing Maximilian opposed the Republic, established since many years, and wished to subject their country to foreign domination, and threatened its integrity. Maximilian was unknown in Mexico and had to obtrude himself upon the country, and this fact must have been foreseen by those who elected him. Iturbide was favored by his prestige as a Mexican, and thus was able to reap the benefits of what others had sown. To this must

be added that the empire, established in Mexico in 1822, was swept away a few months afterward, and not by the reactionary party, and the republic proclaimed in 1823; and it will be seen that the author of the book in question was neither very felicitous in explaining the motives which caused Iturbide's election, nor its consequences.

The precedent of not smothering the monarchical idea in its fountain, when a nation is born to independent life, is a great evil. Washington, in his most eminent act of patriotism and abnegation, foresaw the evils which would be caused to his country by accepting a position which would have flattered any other person, as men of his mark are the exception, and thus he extinguished what would have caused continuous revolutions in his country. Iturbide, ambitious, with less foresight, chose to sow the seeds of discord by strengthening the ideas of retrogression, to eradicate which more than fifty years of continuous struggles and the nationalization of church property have been required. If my advice is worth anything, whoever pretends to write a historical study founded upon facts, ought not to forget what I have pointed out as the causes of our revolutions, as thus he will save time, paper, and refutations.

In all the subsequent paragraphs on page 185 appears the same historical inaccuracy. I will not copy its whole contents, in order not to make my present work more protracted, but will only refer to the principal points. "England, the usurer of the world, advanced money on what she intended to be, as in the case of Egypt, the security of the whole country." This is also false, as England knows well enough where it pays to intrude, and I can only look upon this proposition as proof of the bias existing in the writer's mind.

"Mexico was thrown into bankruptcy by Northern invasion." This deserves about as much credit as the assertion about England's intentions in Mexico. "A direct consequence of her bankruptcy was the intrigue of France, England, and Spain for the tripartite invasion of Mexico." This is false again, and I will prove it.

When the Wyke-Zamacona treaty was not ratified by the Mexican Congress, and the payment of the contracts suspended on account of the revolutions instigated by the party, called by the author, as aforesaid, "reactionary," and not, as he pretends,

in consequence of the bankruptcy of the country, the so-called reactionary, or better said, retrograde party took advantage of the effect caused by this measure of the liberal government to invite the foreign intervention. They began active work in Paris, and when the Emperor Napoleon opened negotiations with the British and Spanish governments, without informing them of his ultimate projects, that party succeeded in bringing about the tripartite convention.

The heaviest creditor of Mexico was Great Britain, the next Spain, and the least of all France, to whom Mexico was indebted for only half a million of dollars, more or less, including sixty thousand dollars, value of *some pastry* abstracted by the populace of Mexico from a French pastry-cook's shop! The invading forces, composed of the three nationalities, landed at Vera Cruz, and as regards numbers they occupied the following order: First, the French; second, the Spanish; and last, the English, which only counted one thousand men, and never passed beyond Vera Cruz. The French and Spanish forces, by agreement with the Mexican government, penetrated into the interior of the country under condition that, notwithstanding the permission to thus establish themselves in a less deadly climate, they should return to their first positions if the conference to be held in Soledad, a village of the State of Vera Cruz, should not be productive of peace. The president of the republic was an Indian of pure blood, Benito Juarez, and the Mexican delegate to the conference was Manuel Doblado.

The conference took place without success as to bringing peace, but with complete success as to convincing England and Spain that the real purpose of Napoleon, with the connivance of the conservative party, was the establishment of an empire, to which end the French expedition had secretly brought out General Almonte, the reputed son of the patriot-priest, Morelos.

Immediate and unconditional restoration of the confiscated ecclesiastical property was demanded, and Napoleon, moreover, exacted the cession of the State of Sonora, a small slice, indeed, of Mexican territory!

There was no longer any question of collecting a debt, but a determined purpose, for the attainment of which Spain, even less than England, wished to contribute. From this moment the tripartite convention was broken, and as the author in question

omitted to state whether the English and Spanish forces remained or retired, I hasten to inform him, so as to calm his uneasiness for our welfare, that both forces reëmbarked. The French remained, and, to collect a debt of half a million dollars, they were prepared to expend hundreds of millions, and to sacrifice thousands of lives.

Matters commenced to appear in their true light when the invading army was joined by the revolutionary conservative forces; the struggle began, and I shall not stop to describe it in detail, with our reverses and triumphs, one of the latter, that of May 5th before Puebla, which forced the invaders to retreat to Orizaba, until large reënforcements arrived from France. After their landing, the invading army advanced again, and after the siege and capture of Puebla, which certainly was not dishonorable to our forces, the former arrived in the capital.

An assembly was convoked for mere form's sake, as long before Maximilian had accepted the crown under conditions adequate to the object in view; and this assembly, which I repeat was called long after the private acceptance of the crown, decreed the empire.

A regency was appointed, consisting of Mr. Labastida, to-day Archbishop of Mexico, General Salas, and Almonte, who, as explained before, had been imported for this purpose by the French expedition. This regency debated at once the unconditional restoration of the ecclesiastical property and the abrogation of the laws abolishing mortmain, without being able to find a solution of the difficulty. For this reason Bishop Labastida resigned, after launching a strong protest, which I beg those persons to read who desire to learn if I am accurate in my narrative. Therefore it is proved that not after the arrival of Maximilian in Mexico, as asserted on page 208, but from the very beginning of the strife, the demand was made for the only object sought by the conservative party, namely, the prerogatives and riches always sought by that party in whatever country it may reign.

On the arrival of Maximilian these demands became stronger, and not only did he not yield (see pages 188 and 208), but on the contrary he confirmed the reform laws, and did not restore to the clergy the remainder of their property, lost by the laws of nationalization and abolition of mortmain, and decreed that the

management and sale of this property should be vested in the Council of State. What better confirmation can we have of the necessity and expediency of the nationalization laws?

The author whom I am contradicting, in passing judgment upon the conservative party which caused such enormous evils to their country, has only the following words: "A party not *blameless altogether*, but yet *honest*." (See page 188.)

I continue my refutation by copying literally from page 188: "The spoliation of the Church by the republic, ruthless and indiscriminating, *had created* a conservative party, not blameless altogether, but yet honest; and to that party Maximilian was pledged."

I continue my system of inverting the sentence, beginning with what is most easily answered in few words.

A party not blameless altogether, but yet honest, which joins with (even allowing, for the moment, that it did not call) the invader of its country! I confess I cannot understand how it thus can retain anything of political honesty; but as the reader is to be the judge, he may perhaps find out how a person or party can be *partly dishonorable* and yet *honest in general*. To follow up the argument of the author, I will give one of my own, which he cannot contradict, as he has already sanctioned it before. There are many Irishmen united with the English oppressors of their country, forming a party, "not blameless altogether, but yet honest"! Any commentary, even the slightest, would destroy the merit of the sublime patriotic idea of the author of relative honesty.

Second part: "The spoliation of the Church by the republic" (which only happened in 1858, through the law nationalizing ecclesiastical property) "*created* this not altogether blameless conservative party."

Let us see if from the facts, given by the author himself of the preceding opinion, the reader can make out the true inwardness of this matter, which as an historian the writer ought to have known. He says, on page 185, "It was impossible that such a people should be eager to seize upon the chances for the erection of a representative government on the ruins of hereditary despotism," and therefore formed a monarchy which it is natural to infer would not be sustained by a liberal, but by a conservative, party. On the same page, and at the end of the paragraph, he

tells us that "a faction collided with a faction" in our revolutions, which began in 1822, to establish for the first time a republic in Mexico, destroying the empire proclaimed in 1822. I understand by this that the party sustaining the republic was the liberal, and its opponent, defending monarchical ideas, the conservative; while the author in question tells us, on page 188, that "the conservative party was created in 1858 in consequence of the spoliation of the Church."

On page 185 he also tells us that "it is not wonderful that revolution followed revolution," and I will not accuse the author of the book contradicted that his constant bias was sufficient to make him believe that one single political party *could fight alone* from 1822 to 1858, as this can only be possible in print, not in reality. But as, according to him, the conservative party was only created in 1858 in consequence of the spoliation of the Church, I would request him to tell us what was the party fighting from 1822 to 1858 against the republican party, blameless altogether, yet dishonest, as I suppose it ought to be classified, according to the author's system.

The same paragraph, on page 185, continues: "It is not surprising that province attacked province." The only answer to this is that it is entirely false.

I have still to answer that item about the spoliation of the Church, and my intention is to contradict it with the aid of the very author of the term "spoliation."

Let us begin by giving Webster's definition of the word "spoliation." It signifies "the act of plundering; robbing by force." I believe that if a government nationalizes any property for the benefit of the people, it cannot be called plundering, as a nation cannot plunder itself. After this let us see if the origin of these same estates does not contradict the foregoing accusation. These estates had been given to the clergy, not in ownership, but in trust for the fulfilment of pious bequests, and when the trustee employed these estates wrongly, for exciting revolts and maintaining charters and privileges to the detriment of the real proprietors, — the people, who had given these estates, — the latter reassumes the title, and supports the Church directly, as the author acknowledges on page 209: "The princely sees have disappeared" (referring to the spoliation which he considers unjust), "but the people sustain their clergy generously." Under the aspect which, in the

opinion of the author himself, the nationalization of Church property has taken, it can no longer be stigmatized as a spoliation.

Continuing the same paragraph, on page 209, the author recognizes that the so-called spoliation was rather beneficial, as it "has the effect of stimulating both Church and State in behalf of popular education." Another favorable consequence is, "that the Church has brought religion more closely to the people." So that neither for these reasons does the nationalization of Church property deserve to be characterized as spoliation.

We further learn, on page 210, from a quotation from Janvier, "that free schools, sustained by the State or municipal governments, the Church or benevolent societies, are found in all towns and villages;" and this since the laws abolishing mortmain were passed, which in this case, besides not being spoliative, have had the beneficial effect of doing away with controversies, and preventing the clergy from taking possession of the public schools, thus violating a constitutional precept. If we added to this that the clergy, whose characteristic picture the author gives us and notes their defects, drawing a parallel between the Church in Mexico and the Established Church in Ireland (pages 183, 206, and 207), neither of them beneficial to their people, has disappeared, it is in Mexico a natural consequence of the law abolishing mortmain, thus producing a benefit to society, and for this reason also the nationalization law does not deserve to be branded as a robbery.

I will conclude here with the quotations regarding the expropriation of which, according to the author of "Political and Progressive Mexico," the republic was guilty, and which quotations appear to me to prove the contrary of what they were intended.

On page 208 he quotes from Alzog: "On the arrival of Maximilian in Mexico, the Church property confiscated and sold during the ascendancy of Juarez and the French agency amounted to about one-third of the real estate of the empire, and one-half of the immovable property of the municipalities," and this estimate considers only what was already sold, not including the property unsold. If we accept the above-given figures of thirty-three per cent. of the real estate of the empire, adding only ten per cent. for the part unsold, and eight per cent. as the value of the property of the municipalities, we obtain the astonishing result that over *fifty per cent. of all the property in Mexico* was held in

mortmain by the clergy. We must not omit to mention that nearly all this property was situated in the most populous districts of the country, and the reader may judge for himself whether or not the amortization of such an enormous amount of property could produce any benefit to the general public, and whether its gradual and steady increase was not a continuous menace to the foundations of society.

The abolition of mortmain carried with it the extinction of charters and privileges providing for special courts for the clergy to try common crimes, governed by distinct laws dispensed by the privileged class itself to whom they referred. This constituted a kind of monarchical institution within the republic, and lasted until 1858, when the law abolishing mortmain was passed. Can it still be called unjust and spoliative?

It seems to me that there exists some analogy between the abolition of mortmain in Mexico, and of slavery in the United States (even admitting that the property of the Church was not simply given by the donors in trust for certain benefits), as both institutions represented a property, both were abolished because they presented a national menace, and in both cases it was done for the purpose of making all classes equal before the law. And while on the one hand the abolition of slavery removed all threatening danger from the progressive path of the United States, on the other hand the nationalization of Church property in Mexico brought about the definite establishment of a liberal republican system, smothered finally all monarchical aspirations, and, thanks to these reform laws, Mexico occupies to-day a place among the nations to which formerly she never could have aspired. With the preceding exposition, and with what I have cited from the author himself, confirming my opinion, I leave to my readers to decide whether the laws abolishing mortmain can be at the same time beneficial and expoliative.

Examining what the author whom I refute has written concerning education, I find a passage which has astonished me, and which has furnished the name for this pamphlet, "THE MEXICAN SPIRIT." On page 199 we read, "The history of education in Mexico is one of hopelessly tangled threads, which, like the mystic symbols on the monuments of Egypt, have scarcely begun to yield their secrets." As he is too profuse in this argument, I must invite the reader who desires to know the details to

follow the author to the next page, where he abandons archæology to launch into historical research concerning the foundation of the University of Mexico and its founders, and after mentioning Saint Thomas Aquinas and the paintings which adorn the University, he arrives at page 204, saying, "The University was abolished in 1865," while, on page 209, he states, "There is no national University, but the people are learning to read." He does not, however, mention either the higher instruction given in the University, nor if until then there were any colleges and public schools. Turning backward again, as it really seems that it is in the author's work that there are hopelessly tangled threads, I find, on page 203, a quotation from Brantz Mayer, asserting that "there was no appropriation for public schools;" to which the author adds, "Colleges appear to have been then as useless as the University; for out of a population of seven millions, less than seven hundred thousand could read."

As he does not speak of public schools, but of colleges, any reader must infer that reading is taught in colleges in Mexico. On page 210 he quotes Janvier, who writes thirty years after the promulgation of the reform laws, and says that "the all but universal illiteracy of fifty years ago is rapidly diminishing." Further on Janvier says, that, "with very few exceptions, free schools sustained by the State or municipal governments, the Church or benevolent societies, are found in all towns and villages; and in all the cities and larger towns private schools are numerous;" and that "while forty years before, the total sum expended on education by the government may not have exceeded a hundred thousand dollars," at the time of writing "it was more nearly five millions, if the contributions from other sources, public and private, were included." Adding also that "there are free night schools for men and women, in which trades are taught." Referring to an American economist, who visited Mexico two years before, or in 1886, our author quotes, on page 211, what I will copy verbatim: "It is safe to say that more good, practical work has been done in this direction, within the last ten years, than in all the preceding three hundred and fifty. At all the important centres of population, free schools, under the auspices of the national government, and free from church supervision, are reported as established; while the

Catholic Church itself, stimulated, as it were, by its misfortunes, and apparently unwilling to longer rest under the imputation of having neglected education, is also giving much attention to the subject, and is said to be acting upon the principle of immediately establishing two schools wherever, in a given locality, the Government or Protestant denominations establish one." Our author concludes his observations about education on pages 211 and 212 thus: "The Government also maintains national schools of agriculture, law, medicine, engineering, military science, music, and fine arts, as well as a national museum and a national library. The charitable and benevolent institutions, public and private, equal in number and scope, if they do not exceed, our own."

In all that I have so far extracted from the work in question, taking special care always to mention the page where found, not a single word is mentioned about public schools from the time of the conquest up to 1844; neither can I find a single word about the general education which the Mexicans received in all branches of human knowledge, nor even the usual comparisons of which the author is so fond. But still that suffices to enable him to form his judgment, and to characterize the people in general which he is studying, and his opinion is as follows, general and absolute, not using a single word excluding this or that social class, as will be seen from pages quoted: pages 184 and 185, completely ignorant; page 200, ignorant, as there remained little material proofs of the achievements of the Spaniards in educating the conquered people; page 209, ignorant till 1888, when the people were beginning to learn to read; and to conclude with the historical study which he makes of public education in Mexico under the system "*Transeuntibus*," I shall copy literally the final sentence of page 198, by which the reader will learn that the Mexican people continued to be ignorant in 1888. "Beautiful (Mexico) to those who robbed her, beautiful to the tourist, her real condition is one which depresses her own people" (the depression seems to be general), "whose poverty, ignorance, and loneliness make them the most pitiable, as they are certainly the most kindly and polite, of this continent."

To analyze the foregoing matter, I must again divide it into sundry points, as the reader must have observed the trouble it cost me to find a starting-point in the hopelessly entangled threads of this historical essay on education in Mexico.

First. As regards the early history of education in Mexico, which the author compares to the unknown meaning of the Egyptian hieroglyphs, he says, "that nothing is known about the instruction of the Indians before the Spanish conquest." On the contrary, a great deal is accurately known about the laws, history, education, astronomical knowledge, and poetry of the Indians. Any Mexican, and, as for that, any earnest American student of Mexican history, might have told the author that before the conquest there existed the historical songs of Netzahualcoyotl, the historian, law-giver, learned astronomer, and poet king of Texcoco, recorded, as the original manuscript was lost, from tradition by his descendant, Fernando de Alba Ixtlilxochilt, who also wrote a "History of the Chichimecs." Both works were even published in Europe, in a translation by Fernan Compans; and if the author could not find them in his excursion through the Mexican book-shops, of which he speaks on page 202 and 203, he might have found them at the national library.

Second. "The Spaniards have left very little material proof of their achievements for the education of the Mexican people."

This is also false, as proved by the author himself whom I am refuting, as among the notable buildings, which he mentions on page 212, there are many which, since early Spanish times, were destined for the purpose which they are filling to-day. If he had paused to reflect a moment when he spoke about the University which had always admitted all social classes, the conquerors as well as the conquered, he might have beheld material and monumental proofs, which, although contemplating them, he did not see (page 200).

Third. "There were no schools in 1844," — at least the reader is left so to infer, as the author's essay on education in Mexico does not make the slightest mention of schools. This is again false, as I shall prove later on by the author's own words, as the education of the people in schools commenced immediately after the conquest. It was certainly restricted, but the same will happen in the next centuries, if public schools are deprived of their independence by mixing religious and secular instruction.

Fourth. "The colleges appear to have been useless until 1844" (page 203). This is absolutely false, and only still

further displays the disposition of the author to treat of subjects of which he knows nothing. Let him take the trouble to ascertain what the men educated in the colleges and the University of Mexico have written in the different branches of human learning, and he will perceive that not only was solid instruction given, but that Mexico was even honored by the results of her institutions of learning, established as far back as the colonial period. And, although that instruction did not obtain the high standard which it does to-day, being then restricted, as it always is where the religious element predominates, it is no exaggeration to say that, taking into consideration the conditions in the period to which I refer, the education given in its colleges can sustain with success any criticism which can be made by the author to whom I refer.

I should require many pages to even give the names of the men whose works have given them a literary position in Mexico, therefore I will cite only Sr. Orozco y Berra, the latest of our historians, whose work on Mexico would teach our author many things of which he is now evidently ignorant. If I am not mistaken, in order to judge a book it is not sufficient to look at the binding; it must also be read. In this same manner, to speak intelligently about the education given to a nation, especially when assuming the character of an historian studying this question, it is not sufficient to look at the college buildings from the outside, but it is necessary to study what is taught in their interior, if the historian himself possesses the necessary rudiments. If he does not, it is best not to mention anything in reference to education; and the worst is, to render an absolute judgment concerning what is unknown to him.

We have still to examine the paragraph of tender commiseration which our author launches against the Mexican people as a farewell, and which I copy again verbatim, as well for the purpose of answering it as also to let my readers enjoy a sample of delicate tenderness, not equalled by either of the Spanish poets, Becker or Jorge Isaacs. Page 198 reads: (Mexico) "beautiful to those who robbed her, beautiful to the tourist, her real condition is one which depresses her own people, whose poverty, ignorance, and loneliness make them the most pitiable, as they are certainly the most kindly and polite, people on this continent."

I divide the foregoing paragraph to answer it, and begin by the

item that Mexico has been robbed. If this refers to her good name, we know already the author of this robbery, and I coincide in his opinion; but if it refers to anything else, I hope he will show us up this knavish thief. I am almost certain that it will again turn out to be those hated Englishmen.

As regards his assertion that in 1888 the condition of Mexico was such as to depress her own people, as the Mexican nation is formed by this same people, it appeared that it depressed itself, which, I must confess, I am unable to understand.

With regard to the poverty of the Mexican people, I have no trouble in confirming what the author of this statement tries to prove: first, "because it is to the credit of the Mexican government" (see page 217) "that no appeals for aid are sent over the world, as for another people oppressed by England;" and, second, so great is the depression and poverty which the Mexican people suffer, that European capital flocks to Mexico, and whenever the government applies for a loan, four times the amount is soon subscribed. And as this capital cannot come in search of more profitable investments, since the Mexican people are so very poor and unable to pay more interest than others, it seems to be clear that this money flocks into Mexico as a charity!

As to the loneliness of the Mexican people, the author of "Political and Progressive Mexico" commits an error of modesty which we cannot let pass by, because, thanks to his visit and his historical study, we have just emerged from this loneliness which has afflicted us for centuries; and thanks to his accurate narrative, the isolation to which we were condemned begins gradually to disappear. If we have the good fortune to be studied by another author of the same strength, I am sure Mexico will be seen in its full light.

I repeat that I am extremely obliged to the author for his kind attention in calling my countrymen, even if ignorant, the most kindly and polite people on this continent. Notwithstanding my appreciation of his kindness, I must observe that it seems that the Spaniard's politeness which we have inherited, like the schools, colleges, etc., shows good results; but should he believe that these schools do not benefit the people, I willingly submit to his opinion, and would only request him not to qualify the ignorance of the Mexican people with the name of a color generally applied in this country to another people.

I may have explained my idea wrongly, but I have been told that a people polite in its manners and attentive in social intercourse possesses already some advantage of education over another nation. In my ignorance I cannot conceive how a people without education can obtain one of the distinctive attributes of civilized society in the sense to which I refer; but if the author of the work in question should not approve my line of thought, as this question is one of personal judgment, following out my intention before announced, I shall respect his opinion, but must beg him not to make use of our failings for comparison with others, as he has used another people to compare with us, because we Mexicans do not believe in his system of comparisons.

I now arrive at the printing-press in Mexico, of which subject the author of the book in question treats on pages 204 and 205. He says that the printing-press was introduced in Mexico twenty years after the conquest, and that the "Spaniards, unlike the English in Ireland, did not make the native tongue penal, and enact special statutes for hanging, disembowelling, exiling, or imprisoning those who employed it for teaching purposes." (See page 204.) May he not have forgotten something more regarding penalties? But at any rate, we have already the satisfaction to learn that there are people even worse than the infamous Spaniards. How very bad these English must be!

On continuing my investigation regarding the printing-press, I learn "that it does not seem to have accomplished much in Mexico, because they printed books of devotion, a fact which irritates some" (see page 205); and why, "would they have had the Greek classics printed for the natives, or works on metaphysics, science, and natural philosophy?" and he adds: "Who would have read them?" He is perfectly right in asking this question; who, indeed, would have read them? Immediately after this he makes an observation which I have not fully understood, but it seems he wishes to convey the idea that the dialects of the different tribes were not exchangeable. He continues to say, "that the printing-press had to make not one Spanish-Indian dictionary, but as many dictionaries as there were tongues;" that "the natives refused the Spanish spelling-books, and continued to hate and tease the invaders."

With this lucid relation the readers of the work "Political and Progressive Mexico" must surely thoroughly understand the

position of the printing-press in Mexico during the days of the conquest and under Spanish rule until Independence. But let us see how the situation continued from 1821 to 1888, according to the same author, and here I shall copy literally from the same page, 204: "To-day this diversity of speech remains to prove that the failure of the printing-press does not constitute good ground for indictment. There are, at least, five distinct languages in Mexico; and millions of the people remain totally or partially ignorant of the official language of the republic." Here it seems that the author committed an error in mentioning a republic, as his imagination must surely have been occupied with kingdoms or empires when he spoke of an official language, as in the Mexican republic we know only a national language.

I shall give here some explanations, begging my readers to compare them with the above-quoted paragraph on page 205. The printing-press was not imported into Mexico without some good results. Not alone did it produce the first newspaper in America, and scientific books which, notwithstanding the author's assertion, found interested readers and natives who were instructed by them; but it also printed, not dictionaries, which would have been useless, but many primary books in as many dialects, which were gradually studied with the utmost care. The conquerors as well as the clergy worked in unison, because the different means pursued by both were directed to obtain the same result, viz., the conquest, by attracting the natives through religion, teaching them Spanish, and dominating them thus more easily than by force.

For this purpose, from the first natives converted they selected the most competent ones to educate them for the priesthood, by giving them just the necessary instruction to fill their part of catechist. They were raised in privileges and consideration somewhat above their countrymen; and this system, ably conceived, contributed largely towards spreading the Spanish language among the natives. In the course of years, and through the continuation of the same system even after the independence of Mexico, the knowledge of Spanish spread among the tribes of the North, as proved by several of those to-day confined on the North American reservations.

The author should have asked any Spanish-speaking American, who had lived for some time in Mexico, whether on any occasion

Spanish was not sufficient for his intercourse with the natives in any part of the country.

As regards the author's not less unfounded assertion that "there are at least five distinct languages in Mexico," it is about as exact as if I should say that there is a population of at least five millions in the United States. Always the same display of accuracy.

In the chapter headed "Religion and Education" (page 199) I find the following passage, dedicated by the author to the political and social progress of Mexico, which I will copy textually: "If we look more closely at the Mexico of this century, of this quarter of the century, and of the present decade, it becomes apparent that a change, organic and constitutional, has been coming silently upon this ancient and secluded country. It is not a change brought about by war, nor substantially advanced by diplomacy. It is a silent revolution, moving gently in the footsteps of peace. We must seek the evidences of it in education, agriculture, and manufactures, and in the sources and uses of revenue."

I will make a stop here, to see if I am able to understand what the author intended by these silent movements. I cannot explain to myself as the effect of a silent revolution, a so notable change in the manner of existence of a nation, which, after putting an end to the era of its internal revolutions, enters with firm and decided step on the path of peace, increases its commerce, greatly develops its industries and agriculture, covers its territory with a net-work of railways, doubles its revenues, and infuses more animation and movement into its public and social life. He says that this silent revolution is not "a change brought about by war;" and I believe he is right, because to me, who have seen, since the war with the United States in 1847, until much later, a good many wars, it appears that they all take place with a good deal of noise. Neither has it been "substantially advanced by diplomacy;" and here he is right again, as I never have heard of any international treaty by which we changed our former political restlessness for a silent movement without impulsion. I will therefore leave my readers to explain for themselves this silent movement, and accepting the author's statement that Mexico continued in 1888 in silent progress, I will take up again the guerilla system, demanded by the critical examination of this work, and

return to page 196, where I find the following passage. While quoting Wells, for the assertion that "in his opinion the State governments forming the Mexican Union are less under federal control than in the United States," and explaining what "public opinion" and "class" means in Mexico, the author comes to the following conclusion: "Why, then, should not the administration be despotic? The fountain will not rise higher than the source." I must stop here to inquire, on what is based the judgment of the author, who calls the Mexican government despotic, while at the same time he tacitly confesses that it has formed a good administration. We have seen by the paragraph on page 199, which I copied, that, referring to the silent movement of progress which was taking place in Mexico in 1888, he calls it "a silent movement, moving gently in the footsteps of peace;" and adds, "of this we seek the evidences in education, agriculture, and manufactures, and the *sources and uses of revenue*." It seems to me that a government producing the foregoing benefits is not, nor can be, a bad government. The fact that, according to our author, not all those who ought to participate in the elections took part in the official vote for president (page 195), and that the practical politicians exercise the principal influence in the elections, and that there exists public opinion, and other suppositions of this kind, do not justify, in my opinion, his calling a government elected in this manner, despotic, when afterwards he acknowledges the benefits produced by its good administration.

I must recall to his memory something which it seems he ought to know, viz., that the practical politicians in nearly every country give to the elections the turn suited to their interest; and that the votes of those who do not belong to what are classes in Mexico, and in some other nations are not even *natives* of the country in which the elections are held, generally do not represent their personal opinion, but are blindly influenced by interested parties, although the government, which they thus help to elect, is not for this occasion called despotic. I believe also that the quotation from Wells on the same subject does not help the author to prove his assertion. But, nevertheless, for argument's sake, I will accept his assertion, and, using the queer logic which so often is exhibited in his work, I will see what it produces as regards Mexico.

I do not believe that anybody can suppose that a government, sustained by the unanimous opinion of the governed, inspiring absolute confidence abroad, and showing its merits by proofs which even the author must acknowledge, can be called despotic in any part of the world. I believe neither that a despotic government can produce any of the benefits related in the work in question. But according to the logic of the author, who pictures everything in Mexico as diametrically opposite to accepted theories or facts, we learn that a despotic government produces the benefits of raising Mexico's credit abroad, procuring stability and peace at home, and impelling the country silently on the path of progress; and one more logical conclusion, the good and not the despotic governments incite revolutions.

Nothing less could happen in a country like Mexico, where everything appears to be contrary to the course of nature, according to the author of "Political and Progressive Mexico." Although independent, her people do not begin to enjoy their natural rights, because the agrarian laws have not been first modified (page 184). Under a despotic government (page 195) the country improves and progresses (page 199), while other countries under such a government are retrograding. In her revolutions a single party, seemingly ambi-political, fights since 1822 for the republican as well as the monarchical principle (page 185) until 1858, when the conservative party was created (page 188). And this party, created in 1858, although allying itself with the invaders of its country, was not dishonorable, as would have happened in any other country, but proved to be "not blameless altogether, yet honest" (page 188). "After the death of Hidalgo his country relapsed under oppression," thus, falsifying history, the author converts the heroic struggle from 1812 to 1821 into a mere canard (page 184). When independence from Spain was accomplished, and a monarchical government established, it turns out to be really a republic (page 184). When her advancements begin to be notable, they are the consequences of a silent movement not brought about by war (page 199), which means, we are to presume, caused the advance of other nations. Her poverty is so great (page 198) that no appeals for aid are sent all over the world (page 217); yet, notwithstanding, foreign capital flows into Mexico, to find more profitable investment than any other and richer countries can offer. And, finally,

passing by many curious statements which might be extracted, I shall only mention that the Mexican people, although poor (page 198), ignorant (pages 184, 185, and 209), depressed, robbed, pitiable, and lonely (page 198), yet, withal, present the rare phenomenon of being the most kindly and polite people on this continent. If anybody should doubt the foregoing contradictory picture which, I repeat, is applied to Mexico, the most *incomprehensible* and *untranslatable* country, I can only answer him, that it is founded on facts and historical studies, made by an eye-witness, and complying with the precept of Bernal Diaz del Castillo. Is it not true that Mexico is really a wonderful country?

It was during the year of 1886 that, in the Boston Horticultural Hall, lectures were given on peculiarities of Mexico. Thousands of persons heard the orator, who, speaking of the Mexican national drink, pulque, said: "But the most surprising quality of pulque is, that it does not affect the head, producing intoxication in the lower extremities only; for example, if a person, sitting in a chair, drinks large quantities, he cannot rise afterward, while his head remains as cool as yours and mine." "Wonderful! wonderful!" exclaimed the lecturer, on finishing his narrative, and I repeat, years afterward, Wonderful!

Returning to my refutation, the author says on page 196, "by information received from patriotic persons," he supposes that there does not exist any "public opinion" in Mexico; another gentleman, not a Mexican, the eminent Secretary of State of this country, has proved how to estimate that opinion, by his answer given to some pretentious citizens of Arizona, in a question relating to Mexico, giving at the same time a severe lesson of patriotism to the informants of our author, who appear to me to be of the same ilk as those who belong to that party which the author qualifies as not blameless altogether, yet honest. I can only regret that he did not reveal the names of those respectable patriots, as I believe that truth and patriotism should be honored.

Applying the proverb used by him on page 195, "The fountain will not rise higher than the source," to a people, it ought to be taken in the sense that every nation has that kind of government which it deserves. The answer is very simple: comparing two nations, — Ireland and Mexico, — he, not I, has done

them justice, and I accept it without the necessity of further explanations. But I do not accept for both nations (if he allows me to be perfectly frank) the hidden meaning of the statement regarding the fountain and its source; not alone because if the source is not very clear, I ought not to permit undue allusions, but also because this is not the place to answer it. I will therefore reserve it, and in due time I will avail myself of his allusions, allowing him, however, their undisputed paternity.

Continuing on my course of investigation, I arrive at page 227, and note the following passage: The author explains that the misunderstandings and prejudices caused by the unfortunate war of 1847, between the United States and Mexico, are gradually disappearing, and that every day brings the sister republics closer together in friendly relations. All this, and what is further mentioned on page 228, promotes peace and harmony between the American and Mexican people, and he desires that even the last remnants of the memories of that war might be blotted out. Here the reader will observe, for the first time, an idea indicating praiseworthy and generous thought in the author. But I am afraid that this thought, which he has found pleasure in destroying almost before it was uttered, will not last long.

I must turn backward again to page 210 in order to gather, as I did before, what refers to the same subject and which is scattered in artistic confusion throughout the whole work. After reminding the reader that our author does not know the Spanish language, and that he has not said a single word about the methods of instruction used, I copy literally: "It must be owned, however, that the history used in the schools gives a version of the American war with Mexico which would somewhat surprise General Scott and the gallant lieutenants who fought with him." To sow suspicion by intentional and disguised words appears to our author as the means most adapted to cause that to be forgotten which he says ought not to be remembered, and contributes toward the desirable end which he assures us to have in view! The only thing certain in his assertion is that it is the opinion of a person who knowingly and mercilessly scourges historical truth, and who takes delight in complying inversely with the motto adapted at the beginning of the work.

I shall also overlook his assertions regarding the servitude under which he supposes the Mexican people suffer, and the Mexican

valor for the combat. In order to refute the first, I would be forced to make a comparative examination, which, though not using any depreciating words, which I never employ, would divert me from my purpose of avoiding comparisons; but, if I should be forced into such a controversy, I would need but little exertion to give a very telling answer. As regards the second point, as we do not need a certificate either affirmative or negative from the author or anybody else for any purpose whatsoever, I can only answer him humbly that his opinion is not worthy to be taken into account, as it is visibly affected by a preconceived prejudice.

I purposely left for the last examination a subject which, in my opinion, is very serious, as it is uttered by a Catholic, and was published in a newspaper whose title indicates its character,—“The Catholic World.”

The author of the work under discussion, when referring to the acts of the conquerors of Mexico and to the means they employed for dominating the conquered race, says, on page 180, quoting from Janvier: “They (the Spaniards) charge the natives with cruelty; they set up the Inquisition among them to enable the State to be more cruel, while the name of the Church was borrowed to wear the responsibility, and carry down to our time the reproach.” I must confess that I never heard anything more atrocious.

The universal reprobation which has fallen on the Inquisition becomes doubly horrible if to its many sins is still to be added what the paragraph copied above indicates; but the latter may be considered as a production of the author whom I am contradicting, because I have read with great care pages 25, 26, and 27 of Janvier’s work, and its contents differ from the extract made by our author to such an extent that it seems to me that Janvier’s statement about the intentions of the Spaniards in the establishment of the Inquisition in Mexico is entirely different from what the author of the work in question asserts.

On pages 25 and 26 Janvier says: “About the year 1529 a council was held in the city of Mexico composed of the most notable men, religious, military, and civil, then in the Province, including Bishop Fuenleal, who was President of the Audiencia,

together with all the members of that body ; the Bishop of Mexico (Zumárraga), the heads of the Dominican and Franciscan orders, the municipal authorities, and two prominent citizens. As the result of its deliberations, this council solemnly declared : It is most necessary that the Holy Office of Inquisition shall be extended to this land, because of the commerce with strangers here carried on, and of the many corsairs abounding upon our coasts, which strangers may bring their evil customs among both natives and Castilians, who by the grace of God should be kept free from heresy. . . .” Further, on the same page 26 he says : “The full fruit of the declaration of the council ripened in 1570, when, under date of August 16th, a royal order issued, appointing Don Pedro Moya de Contreras (afterward Archbishop, and sometime Viceroy of the Province) Inquisitor General of New Spain, Guatemala, and the Philippine Islands, with headquarters in the city of Mexico. The fact *should be noted* that the royal order under which the Inquisition was established in Mexico *expressly exempted the Indians* from its jurisdiction, — a political arrangement that gave it from the outset a *strong, popular support*.” The comparison between the above quotation of Janvier’s work and the quotation of the same by the author to whom I refer, proves that the latter’s truthfulness does not indicate much historical study, and moreover demonstrates that a prejudice is a moral infirmity, which not only prevents from perceiving the limits not to be passed by a narrator of historical events, but also from seeing the objects as they really are.

The consideration of the religious fanaticism of the century when the Inquisition was established, the ideas of absolutism in the government, and other reasons so well known that it is not necessary to mention them, are alone sufficient in the conscience of the historian studying that dreadful tribunal to mitigate somewhat its odious enormity. If, however, it is despoiled of what contributes towards forgetting it, and its memory is revived among the people by representing the Roman Catholic Church as accepting the part of executioner, not for the purpose of purifying the religious creed, but for the purpose of dominating the innocent, miserable, and conquered people by means of the rack and the stake, there will never have been described anything more repugnant, nor the enemies of the Catholic Church furnished with a more terrible weapon,

Was the author of this idea convinced of its truth? Did he reflect that on launching this terrible accusation he would stab, not the conqueror, but the Church? Or did he believe that he could upbraid the Spanish clergy without offending others?

If, instead of seeking for sensations to figure in newspaper articles, he had paused to reflect for a moment before making such use of his pen, he would not have descended to a ground which, in my opinion, he ought to have respected. By no means was it necessary that the Church would have lent her name to enable the State to be cruel. As Church and State were in close union, the efforts of both these powers were directed to the same end, and, without diverting the Inquisition from the purpose for which it was created, or without assisting the conqueror to be more cruel toward the native, the Church obtained their absolute submission by protecting them, because her interest demanded that the religion preached by her should not become odious to the Indians.

In all times the Church has rested upon the mass of her faithful followers; but if she makes religion odious to them, she could neither retain them nor increase their number, but would lose their support. The same thing took place during the conquest of Mexico and for centuries afterward, the clergy showing great activity in converting the Mexican Indian races, and either by ordaining for priesthood those natives who proved to be most competent to catechise their conquered brethren or by using other means, to obtain the object in view; viz., to lean on the masses in order to retain such preponderating influence in the State that the latter was forced to obtain the sanction of the Church for all its acts, whether they affected religion or not. This is a logical deduction, proved, not contradicted, by history on every page. On the other hand, it is illogical, and proves the contrary of what it is intended to do, — to suppose for a single moment that the sacrifice of the natives through the Inquisition could have fostered in them a fanaticism on religious subjects which is evident even to-day.

In Mexico they raise statues to missionary priests, and call them apostles and protectors of the native race. But against whom did they defend the Indians? Naturally against the conquerors. Could they have done this if the Church had made common cause with the conqueror to martyrize the natives by

giving him a religious order for the purpose? Can it be supposed for a moment that the Church would not have been cognizant of this? Is it likely that those missionary priests, so wrapped up in their noble mission that they did not hesitate to alleviate the situation of the Mexican Indian at the expense of numberless sacrifices, even of their lives, that they should protect the native against the conqueror, only to leave him at the mercy of the Inquisition?

Without going back to former events, and only taking advantage of what the sight of the collegiate church of our Lady of Guadalupe suggests to a student looking for facts to clear up some points in the history of a race, he would have found abundant motives for a well-founded understanding of the exact truth. He had only to inquire, how, by whom, and for whom the before-mentioned collegiate church was erected, in order to clearly understand that these could not be the effects of the Inquisition, whose only product is universal execration.

I do not consider that the facts which called for Swinton's book, causing an agitation which has not yet subsided, are as serious as the above-given quotation of the author of "Political and Progressive Mexico." Swinton referred to occurrences which, if true, would only assume a speculative character, while those asserted by the author in question, if certain, amount to the infamous sacrifice of thousands of human lives by the rack and the stake under cover of the mantle of the Church, with a monastic fraternity as executioner through the Inquisition, making a picture most repulsive not alone to the sight of an enemy of the Church, but even to that of the most fervent Catholic.

It may be that I am mistaken in supposing that he desires to exalt, not to humble, the Catholic Church. If this should be the case, I will take back what I said on this subject, and accept his opinion in regard to the opportuneness of publishing what he considers an historical study. It remains yet to be seen whether, if any one take advantage of it in order to attack the Church, how can such an attack be refuted, considering by whom it was published first.

With the foregoing I have concluded what I intend at present to publish in refutation of the work, "Political and Progressive Mexico," and I believe that I have succeeded in demonstrating, by the book itself, how little of truth it contains, and that it cannot deny its origin nor its purpose, which certainly was not to present to the reader anything which could instruct him.

In the works of Janvier, Wells, and Brantz Mayer, consulted by him, can be found at least something not wholly unfavorable to Mexico; but if anything of that kind is quoted by him, it is not for the purpose of accepting, but of contradicting, the favorable opinion of the original author, adopting as his own only those passages which can be used in any way to confirm the passionate prejudice displayed by the author, through the historical sketch to which I refer.

I have diligently searched whether perhaps the monumental objects of our country, which always exercise a powerful influence on the minds of historians, caused any favorable impression on the writer alluded to, because the works of genius in a country go far to influence any opinion of that country; but I failed to find any such indications. But it could not be otherwise, as his object was not to write impartially, but to take advantage of the opportunity for applying to a nation the predominate bias of the author; for this purpose it was necessary to humble her people in every respect, to wound their patriotism without any cause or motive, and pronounce them to be abject, oppressed, miserable, poor, and ignorant, and to preach to them that they should make an effort for the recovery of their liberty, seventy years after they heroically had conquered it. For this end it was also necessary that the teachings of history should be forgotten, as well as what is being published daily by competent persons; but not satisfied with that, the author added to his absolute ignorance of the people whom he was studying, an entire forgetfulness of every rule of equity. The result of all this had necessarily to be such a mass of errors that it was only sufficient to coördinate and expose them in order to see them destroyed by their own contradictions. This is all the more noteworthy, because the author, in order to give a more serious character to his work, invokes as his motto a maxim which not only justifies my remarks, but even imperatively demands them.

He undertook to pass judgment upon a people which, on account of its origin, as well as of the different races of which it is composed, possesses a peculiar character of nationality of its own. Born to a life of liberty and shaking off foreign domination, it was obliged to make Titanic efforts in order to advance out of the total absence of political self-government under which it had suffered for centuries before the day of its independence, to its actual political constitution, which is a model amongst the

most liberal, since although it does not grant the electoral vote to foreigners, it gives them the same rights otherwise as Mexicans. As a free nation, casting loose from a most narrow religious fanaticism, and from statutes and privileges oppressing the middle and lower classes of society, it has succeeded in giving them perfect equality and in establishing religious liberty; and as a rare phenomenon, it has not only continued in the path of progress in education and improvements in every sense, not even checked by its revolutions, but also the public wealth is increasing, and the political commotions have left so little demoralization in the social masses that it is exceeded very little, if at all, by other nations in regard to personal safety; and as for respect for property and commercial honesty, it can, without fear, invite comparison with other nations which have not been obliged in their progress to undergo such severe trials.

Hardly have the traces of a bloody foreign invasion been obliterated when an era of most marked progress sets in, thanks to an administration established on solid foundations; education is extended widely; the extension of a telegraphic system, which has already acquired noteworthy proportions, is encouraged; generous subventions are granted for providing the country with a network of railroads; public revenue is doubled; the credit of the country abroad is rising, and inspires such confidence that more money is offered than is asked for, and foreign capital flows in to seek advantageous investments in private enterprises or in public bonds, which are the most trustworthy guides for estimating the stability of a government or the condition of a people; and this is the moment which a writer believes opportune for calling that government despotic, and that people oppressed. Is it possible to regard his opinion as justified by the knowledge which he pretends to possess of the history of that nation? To terminate this refutation, I can add that it was only necessary for him to write without the slightest knowledge and under the influence of a constant prejudice, and to defame a nation by making inopportune comparisons, in order to demonstrate the truth of the author's own saying, —

“The fountain will not rise higher than the source.”

The volume containing the historical study which I have refuted covers also another literary work under the title of “*Picturesque Mexico*,” which shows a marked difference not only in its

character, but also because it reveals the efforts of the author to make it as exact as possible. As the writer was provided with a fair knowledge of the Spanish language, he expresses the more truthfully the notes taken during an excursion to Mexico; and when about to compile in book form the articles originally written for a newspaper, he tried to perfect his knowledge of Spanish in order to better understand what he was studying, and in this manner to be able to form a more just opinion. But as soon as he came in contact with subjects not verified by his own eyes, he could not escape some slight errors, which certainly are very pardonable, as his work does not make any pretensions to be of an historical character, like the one I have just refuted. I am really sorry to be obliged to rectify some of his statements, as I must acknowledge that his work has not the intention of hurting our feelings.

On page 69 and 70, narrating a visit paid to an abandoned and half-ruined convent, the author takes occasion to characterize the action of the Mexican government in nationalizing the property of the Church, and afterwards, as he supposes, abandoning it to ruin, as "another of the *hieroglyphics of this untranslatable country*." These mysterious hieroglyphics can be deciphered in every language; the convent alluded to was sold to an American railroad company some years before the author to whom I refer visited it, and it was not put to the use for which it was purchased; this is an American, not a Mexican, hieroglyphic.

On page 50, referring to Maximilian, he makes some remarks which, in part, have already been answered in my foregoing refutation of the work "Political and Progressive Mexico." I dissent from his opinion that Mexico under the dominion of a foreign prince would have found that which she has to-day, without desiring more, under a "military despotism," which allows us more individual liberty than in other countries. This is a question of patriotism, according to the different conception of the same. As regards the complete abnegation and personal sacrifice of the unhappy prince whom he mentions, I am sorry to dissent again from his opinion, as it would be necessary to reverse the past and obliterate events which contradict that opinion. But still I find it strange that when visiting the spot where the nation dealt out justice to one who, through ambition, sacrificed so many lives and left thousands of families in orphan-

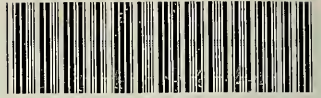
age, misery, and mourning, he should not turn his vision to the adjacent fields, and on learning of the many thousands of men cut down there by an ambitious prince's persistence in making a nation happy against her wishes, should have consecrated to them a small part of the tender remembrance which he doubtless guards for his countrymen who died in defence of the independence of their country, as I suppose the life of a man is of the same value, be he an Indian or European, if it is sacrificed to so noble a cause.

In order that he may compare the abnegation and self-sacrifice of a prince with the abnegation of a plebeian, I will permit myself a small digression, for the truth of which I can vouch. Two Mexicans suffered together with Maximilian the same penalty; they were Miramon and Mexia,—the latter an Indian of pure race. The former would not even attempt to recover his liberty, although possessing great facilities to favor his flight, if Maximilian could not share the same opportunity." Mexia had formerly saved the life of a general who had great influence in the victorious army of Querétaro. Out of gratitude this general sought the presence of the captive Mexia and told him: "I owe you my life, and will pay my debt by saving yours." Mexia asked: "Is the emperor going with me?" and receiving for answer, "Impossible," he answered, "I shall remain;" and he was shot together with Maximilian and Miramon. I beg the author to learn the facts concerning the attempted escape of Maximilian from Querétaro.

I repeat that, although I have been obliged to answer some of his assertions I do not respect the less his personal opinion. For me his work has not only the merit which in justice is due to its intrinsic value, but also another, in that by its publication in the same volume with and preceding a work in which we are described as an ignorant and lonely people, separated from other civilized nations, it gives powerful assistance to my refutation of the latter work. In order to not destroy the effect of "Political and Progressive Mexico," its companion of publication, "Picturesque Mexico," should not be read, or otherwise it is necessary to deny the truthfulness of the statements of an author who paints our country in a manner exactly contrary to the picture of the other writer. It is impossible to attribute equal truthfulness to both works, and I shall leave the reader to judge of their respective merits.



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